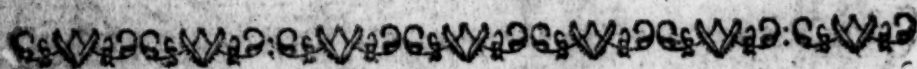




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INTO THE
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OF A CERTAIN
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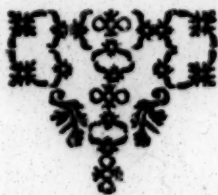
IN A
SERIES OF LETTERS,
First published in the
CRAFTSMAN OR GRAY'S-INN JOURNAL;

With an INTRODUCTION to

D——D G——K, Esq;

*Non s. quid turbida Roma
Elovet, accedas; Examenve improbum in illa
Castiges Trutina.*

PERSIUS.



L O N D O N :

Printed for M. THRUSH, the Second Door up Salisbury-Court,
in Fleetstreet. M.DCC.LX.

Advertisement.

THE proprietors of the Craftsman, or Gray's-Inn Journal, take this opportunity of returning thanks to the public, for the kind reception of the letters, now collected in this form, for the reasons mentioned in the dedication: and as the authors have promised them a continuance of their correspondence, they shall periodically publish a collection of their animadversions in the same manner.





T O

D——D G———K, Esq;

S I R,


 SET of gentlemen who are friends to theatrical amusements, and are desirous of confining each performer to characters adapted to his powers; have prevailed on the proprietors of the Gray's-Inn Journal, to republish in this collected form, the critical observations which appeared towards the close of the last season, relative to the characters of Pierre in Venice Preserv'd, Hamlet, and Richard the III^d, as represented by you and others. The apprehension of their being lost as detached pieces, and the certainty of their not being as generally in the hands of the public as they wish, were their original motives to this undertaking: but an additional one has now arose, from a prevailing, tho' perhaps ill grounded, report of your intention of never again appearing in the former

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of

of those characters, and excited them thus to attempt the perpetuating an idea of your performance in it.

And altho' the comparative estimation of your merit is not always so favourable as to tickle your vanity, yet are they persuaded that in your calmer hours of reflection, you will confess yourself indebted to a chastisement apparently productive of advantages both to you and the public. You, Sir, it will naturally engage in a strict attention to the strength of your own abilities, and in a more correct study of the capital parts of tragedy, which you have undertaken to personate: by this means you will be enabled, either to perform them with greater propriety, or pursue, perhaps, a more sensible measure, and quietly resign them. The present admirers of theatrical amusements will be taught, what they ought to expect, the immediate stage performers what they ought to give, and posterity shall learn that pre-possession, tho' in its meridian in favour of a capital actor, yielded to the lights of nature and reason.

Influenced by these motives, whose name could they prefix? To whom but you, Sir,
could

could they with propriety inscribe this collection? Yet be not alarmed; they have no mercenary views in this dedication; the tenor of it is too uncourtly for that purpose: it pays no *devoir* to your private virtues, no undeserved compliments to your public talents. The authors expect not to be rewarded by your munificence, nor even thanked by your gratitude. They mean it in no other light, than as a fair notice to you of their intention of laying open a stated account between you and the public; of the indulgence of the one, and the desert of the other. They will place to the credit of the public, the favours heaped on you since your first admission to the stage; and will chearfully submit to your charge for the extraordinary pains you have taken to deserve them. They are willing to acknowledge how much the public is indebted to you for your unequalled zeal in the revival of expiring, and the introduction of expired plays; but must request of you, not to plume yourself too much on the merit of those dragged into existence last season, as you might unadvisedly estimate their value at too high a rate; whereas it is a matter of notoriety, that even under the present depravity of taste, not a single piece of them (*Love A-la-mode* excepted)

cepted) could, without the insatiate thirst of novelty, the weight of power, and what is still more interesting, your uncommon concern for their success, have survived three nights. In ballancing the account, they are of opinion, that unless some considerable articles in your favour have escaped their attention, and of which they should be glad to be reminded by your friends, they shall convince every unprejudiced person, that the too indulgent public, has enabled you to acquire a large stock of fame, upon the credit of theatrical science, which you never possessed.

If censure be the tax that every man must necessarily pay to the public for his eminency; it may be asked, how it comes to pass, that the incense of flattery has been so lavishly offered up at your shrine, when your powers were greatest; and that now when every incentive to envy has died away, observers should thus attend to, and what is still more affecting to you, thus publish your histrionic blemishes? To account for this seeming inversion of Swift's observation, the authors answer, that they remember well your first appearance on the stage, and can recollect, without blushing, that they joined in the general
cry

cry of your merit: they saw your inattentions to stops, cadencies, grammatical construction, meaning of the writer, &c. &c. but confess, that your discernment of passions, your quickness in expressing them, and the novelty of your manner, engaged them in an acquiescence to negligencies, which experience and instruction were likely to correct. In this expectation *they* submitted without censuring, and under this indulgence *you* proceeded without improving; so that having now usurped an almost unquestioned claim to applause, you seem surprized when you receive it not, and angered if told you do not merit it.

Unbiaffed by your smiles, and unaffected by your frowns, ours shall be the task to make you *know yourself*, and disabuse the public of its prejudices. And introductory to this laborious work, we thus inform you, that altho' your discernment may still be exquisite, and your face-expression good; yet are your powers dwindled, your execution become defective, and your novelty worn out; that under these circumstances, something; at least, like good sense, must be substituted in their room; that before the tribunal of reason, we purpose summoning you weekly, if you will
afford

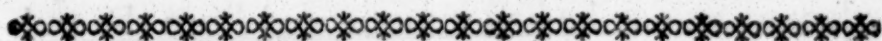
afford us an opportunity, to try by the touchstone of true criticism, the sterling value of your remaining merit; there you may be persuaded, no tricks shall pass unobserved, no defects remain unnoticed, nor any faults escape unchastised.

We are, and mean to continue, your

CONSTANT ATTENDANTS.



AN
ENQUIRY
INTO THE
REAL MERIT
OF A CERTAIN
POPULAR PERFORMER..



To the CRAFTSMAN.

Tecum habita & noris quam sit tibi curta supellex.

PERSIUS.

SIR,

YOU may remember, Sir, in the beginning of the season, when a general dissatisfaction prevailed at the extraordinary step the managers of Drury-Lane theatre thought proper to take, in discharging their principal tragedian, the public were appeased by insinuations, artfully thrown out in various coffee-houses, that Mr. G—— would himself appear in all the capital characters, which the performer, who had left him, was allowed to fill to most advantage.

B

The

The promised pleasure of seeing the great theatrical favourite in many new parts, added to the high expectation, that unthought of beauties would be struck out by a superior genius, in scenes that had been well executed before, for a time reconciled the play-followers to the loss of an actor, who sustained many characters with propriety, some with great abilities. But as the winter advanced, and the town observed, that, instead of the inimitable compositions of the immortal Shakespear, Otway, and Rowe, which in preceding seasons furnished at least a considerable part of the entertainment of the stage, the stalls of Moorfields had been ransacked for exploded comedies, and *Woman's a Riddle*, a production that would disgrace the booths of Smithfield, was obtruded on the public, with unparalleled effrontery: the murmur, which for a while had subsided, got abroad again, and in every company the ungrateful return, made by the manager, to the unprecedented favour he had experienced from the public, became an established topic of conversation. If one went to a rout, or entered a coffee-house, there was a certainty of hearing some person or other of the company, hold forth in the following manner, viz. "What does Mr. G—— mean? does he think, that he can dupe us thus egregiously, without even saving appearances? Can he be so presumptuous to suppose, that the town will excuse his repeated insults on their taste and understanding, from *Woman's a Riddle*, down to the *Desert Island* inclusive? Why did he part with Mossop? Or, since he has suffered him to go, why does he not act some of that performer's parts, as he promised?—Does he flatter himself, that the world will not resent his with-holding Mrs. Cibber from them? For so he certainly does, by putting it out of his power to exhibit, with tolerable decency,

those

those plays, in which her excellence stands in a most distinguished light?—Or, perhaps, this may be the reason—his jealousy will not suffer him to permit that admirable actress to grace the stage, and captivate the admirers of the drama, in the extensive manner that her genius is capable of; tho' fear so far gets the better of another powerful passion, as to compel him to pay her equal to her merit."—From repeated sarcasms of this kind, which have been so universally vented, that undoubtedly they must have reached his ears, Mr. G— has been at length induced to fulfil his promise to the public in part, and play the character of Pierre, in *Venice Preserved*, for the benefit of Mrs. Cibber. I own my curiosity was greatly excited on this occasion, and I took care to place myself in an advantageous situation in the pit. The two hours of waiting, I spent in reflecting on the great dignity and importance, with which Mr. Quin had sustained the character of Pierre. In him every requisite of the part seemed to unite. With a noble gallantry (the grand characteristic of that conspirator) he displayed an unconquerable firmness of mind, a generous warm attachment to, and confidence in, his friend, an heroic contempt of death on the discovery of the plot, and an ingenuous indignation at the treachery of Jaffier. In the last act, when brought to execution, he shewed the struggles of a great mind, superior to the terrors of death, but unable to support the idea of infamy. Hence the involuntary tear forced its way, but with a manliness of expression, correspondent to that true courage, which fears nothing but ignominy. Subordinate to this great performer, and *longo sed proximus intervallo*, Mossop succeeded to my thoughts. I recollected with pleasure, the manly powers he exerted in the character, did him justice, in my own mind, for the

great correctness and energetic force of elocution, with which he delivered the sentiments of the poet, and particularly recollected the amazing fulness and command of voice, expressing the feelings of a great mind, when Jaffier, in the capital scene of the fourth act, entreats him to accept of life, on the terms proposed by the senate. In this reverie, the curtain drew up, and the second scene brought Mr. G—— to my view. I was a little shocked at first by the insignificance of a figure, totally opposite to my conception of the character, but supposed I should get the better of that unfavourable impression, as he grew warm in the part. The first speeches were spoke with great languor and insensibility, at which I was much disgusted, my mind being strongly possessed with the force of the performers above-mentioned; but how great was my astonishment, when, in opening the conspiracy to Jaffier, a picture of low cunning, and suspicious design was presented, instead of the noble confidence of the generous Pierre. So unlike did this circumstance appear to the idea of a great mind, disclosing an important undertaking to a bosom friend, that it betrayed all the littleness of a Green-room plot, and he appeared to me to be settling with one of his creatures, a deep-laid scheme of reducing some poor devil of an actor, from forty to thirty shillings a week. This scene was received with such universal contempt, that I do not wonder Mr. G—— who has long been accustomed to command applause, whether deserved or not, should be a little abashed. Indeed it seemed to hang on his spirits in the second act, for if this was not the case, how is it possible to account for the glaring want of weight, so observable in his delivering that very animated speech, in which Pierre endeavours to rouse his friend from the inglorious thought of ending his misfortunes by death. The
third

third act, I flattered myself, would produce something, tho' I was a little discouraged by observing that Pierre, who should be a conspicuous figure, sunk into the groupe of conspirators, notwithstanding they were most judiciously selected to set him off to the greatest advantage. However, I did imagine, that Mr. G——'s genius would undoubtedly take fire in the subsequent part of the scene, where Pierre is animated with a glow of friendship and honest resentment, at the suspicion thrown upon his friend: But, alas! here too disappointment succeeded to my expectation: An entire want of consequence, and an insufficiency of voice, sunk this great situation (the greatest perhaps an actor could wish for, except that in the fourth act) into coldness and neglect. Even that masterly suppression of rage, where Pierre says—*No more of this—'twill breed ill blood among us*—lost its effect, being delivered with a peevishness repugnant to the character of Pierre, who, though he knows Renault to be a villain, and is perfectly acquainted with his motives for traducing Jaffier, with a suitable dignity, restrains his resentment, lest it should defeat the execution of the grand design. Dissatisfied as I was with what I had seen, I still was willing to be deceived, and prevailed upon myself to think, that the grand act of the play would make me ample amends. Nay, I went so far as to think, that the unforcible manner, in which that spirited speech, *Cursed be your senate, cursed your constitution, &c.* was uttered, must be ascribed to an artifice in the player, who might think it necessary to reserve the full exertion of his voice for the following scene; but Mr. G—— unkindly removed my delusion, by immediately after manifesting, that his powers for tragedy are dreadfully impaired; for he gave so little force to the poignant sentiments, suggested by his situation, and so

totally

totally failed in expressing the indignant feelings of a soul like Pierre's, regardless of life, but tortured with the self-reproach of having chosen from the rest of mankind, a traitor for the partner of his heart, that the representation lost all kind of importance; and I could not avoid thinking, that I was present at an additional scene in the Beggar's Opera, and Macheath was abusing Jemmy Twitcher, for 'peaching him. In the beginning of this letter, I endeavoured to give some faint idea of Mr. Quin's admirable playing in the last act of this excellent tragedy. Let it suffice then to say, that Mr. G——'s performance here was the direct reverse of that gentleman's, and indeed, not to pronounce too hastily upon it, appeared so void of all kind of sensibility, as not to deserve farther notice. I left the playhouse so much disconcerted with the disappointment I had undergone, that I took up the pen directly, determined to communicate, through your paper, to Mr. G—— how very unfit he is for the character I have just gone through an examination of. Let me take this opportunity likewise of informing him, that it would be of no disservice to him, if he took some pains, in enabling himself to give the meaning of his author to the audience; nor let him think me guilty of ill-nature or exaggeration, when I assure him, that he did not speak twenty lines in the whole part of Pierre, without a manifest error in the cadence, pause, or accent.

I am, S I R,

*Middle-Temple,
March 17, 1760.*

Your constant reader,

T. F.

To



To the CRAFTSMAN.

—————*Haberes*

Magnum adiutorem, posset qui ferre secundas. HOR.

S I R,

THE letter upon the character of Pierre, published in your paper of the 22d of March, which has been very much the subject of coffee-house conversation, induced me to be present at Mr. G——'s second performance of that part on Tuesday last. I went in company with a country clergyman, who had never seen our theatrical idol: and thought myself lucky in having an opportunity of trying that performer's real merit by the test of good sense, uninfluenced by caprice or thoughtless prejudice. I sincerely acknowledge, that, in the view I considered Mr. G——'s performance, he displayed infinite art, and extraordinary good nature. He seemed to me to judge, that, as the young gentleman, for whose advantage the play was acted, would probably be attended by his particular friends, he could not serve him more essentially than by setting off his acting in the most conspicuous light. In order to effect this, it was observable, that, throughout the play, he underacted his part with most consummate judgment; insomuch, that it is hardly a compliment to Mr. Holland, to assure him, that he never made so capital a figure on the stage, as in the tragedy of Venice Preserved. Nor let the superficial reader think lightly of the skill shewn by the British Roscius on this occasion; for the ability of underacting, or, as the author of my motto expresses it,

ferre

ferre secundas, was held in high consideration by the Romans; as is fully shewn by the commentators on that passage of Horace. As this refined species of playing is little understood by an English audience, our great performer did not receive that tribute of applause, which his admirable talents entitle him to; but instead of the senseless acclamations of the million, he enjoyed the more valuable approbation of the judicious few. I am satisfied, that I do not over-rate Mr. G——'s great skill in sinking his theatrical powers on this occasion; for I found my own opinion confirmed by the simplicity of my friend, whom I told, that Mr. Garrick performed the part of Jaffier, and asked him, what he thought of that wonderful genius? After a short pause, he replied, Why, faith, I think he is very well; but, I own, he does not answer what I had heard of him in the country: and as to that other gentleman, who acts Pierre, I suppose he has not been long on the stage, for I observe, that he labours very much to imitate the other; but he falls vastly short of the original. I am glad of this public opportunity of acknowledging the agreeable entertainment I received at this performance, and flatter myself, that, as the papers inform us the character of Lothario is relinquished, we shall next winter have the pleasure of seeing an attempt in Horatio, which cannot fail of being highly diverting; for there is no medium in acting, which must be either very good or bad; and next to the satisfaction of seeing a tragedy character sustained with accuracy and judgment, is the pleasure of seeing it humorously travestied.

I am Sir, your constant reader,

and shall be (if you permit me)

Bedford Coffee-house,
April 16, 1760.

your frequent correspondent,

X. Y. Z.



To the CRAFTSMAN,
S I R,

*Cætera de genere hoc, adeo sunt multa, loquacem
Delassare valent Fabium.* HOR.

THE letter, published in your paper of the 22d of last month, estimating the comparative merits of Mr. Q—n, Mr. M—p, and Mr. G—k, in the character of Pierre, awakened in me a strong desire of seeing the latter in that exhibition; and finding it advertised for the benefit of Mr. Holland, I determined on gratifying my inclination. As I had resolved on attending to the sentiments of the author, and the propriety with which the actor delivered them, I went alone; but my unkind stars fixed me next a person, whose virulency and peculiarity of expression, are to me a demonstrative proof of his being the very author of your first letter. During the lazy minutes, which passed previous to the drawing up of the curtain, he entertained me with several anecdotes of the jealous, jaundiced temper, as he was pleased to call it, of Mr. G—k, as to rivalry in his profession; and strengthened his accusation by a recital of facts, that bespoke an intimacy with theatrical matters. As I ever thought it an invidious task to investigate blemishes, even in the most exceptionable characters, I flattered myself I might silence him by observing, that my call there was amusement, that I found Mr. G—'s personating the character of Pierre had been strenuously objected to, and that I came there determined to judge for myself, with a mind rather disposed to

overlook, than search for inaccuracies. Desirous, I presume, of strengthening his party by the accession of my voice, he endeavoured pre-possessing me in favour of his opinion, by assuring me, I should find him defective in every particular requisite to constitute a Pierre; his figure insufficient, his voice inadequate, his executive powers of every kind impaired, and, what is still worse, said he, you will find him frequently mistaking the meaning of the author, and often exceedingly erroneous in his pauses, accents, and cadences. Unanswering I heard all this, and was happily relieved from the necessity of listening longer to a general censure of a favourite actor, by the appearance of Priuli and Jaffier. As the time approached for the appearance of Pierre, I flattered myself I should be able to silence the petulance of this rash critic, by a candid examination of facts. As I am, however, apprehensive, that I had not the success I hoped for, I think it right to lay before the public, through your paper, an impartial account of his observations: if they have merit, they may caution Mr. G——k to be more watchful; not solely in capital matters, but even as to inaccuracies; if they be futile, they may silence that irritated writer and his emissaries. And this, I apprehend, would be a very desirable end, as he gave me to understand, that they purposed scrutinizing every character personated by him next winter, with equal rigour.

Scarcely had he appeared in the second scene, when he attacked him as guilty of false emphasis, in delivering his observations on the delusion of the people with regard to but the show of freedom they enjoyed:

Yet *whom* they please they lay in basest bonds;
Bring *whom* they *please* to infamy and sorrow;

In speaking the first line, he laid the emphasis on the word *whom* in the second on *please*. Now, said he, Mr. Q—n laid the emphasis on the words *they please*, to give Jaffier an idea of the abuse of the senatorial power, unrestrained by any law, but inclination. I differed from him, and urged that Mr. G——k laid it properly in the first line on *whom*, to convince Jaffier, that it might be their turn next, to be deemed obnoxious to them: and on the word *please* in the second, without attending to *they*, to shew him, by a general observation, that safety in every state, too much depended on the whim and caprice of rulers, without meaning to specify those of Venice. By this means the reflection is of extensive use, which otherwise loses great part of its merit by restriction. This defence I thought unanswerable——he perhaps thought it did not deserve an answer.

In narrating the situation of Jaffier's house and family, he observed, that there was a want of sufficient solemnity in that very interesting description, which appears to be one of the strongest incentives to Jaffier's engaging in the conspiracy. Professed friend as I am to Mr. G——k, I could not but acknowledge the propriety of his observation. I remember Mr. Q—n; I with pleasure recollect that the distress for the situation of his friend, seemingly disqualified him for the recital of facts, to every circumstance of which he gave a peculiar tone of voice, expressive and energetic. Having finished the description, the resigned Jaffier says, *Now thank Heav'n!*—Pierre angered, interrupts him, by repeating the ejaculation *Thank Heav'n!* and asking the question *For what?* The critic at my elbow declared Mr. G——k censurable, for speaking the whole line without a break; urging, that he should have paused at the end of the word *Heaven*; and then, not being able to discover the

cause of that ejaculation, should have asked *For what?* in a different tone of voice. If I remember right, Mr. Q—n spoke it so, and upon his authority, I apprehend, the observer built his censure: however, I told him, that the manner of speaking it, appeared to me, to be rather a matter of fancy than judgment. He repeated with warmth, that I was partial, that it was an error, and arose from his not understanding the meaning of the author.

Pierre endeavouring to animate Jaffier, says,

Die !

Consider well the cause, that *calls* upon thee ;
And if thou'rt base enough, die then :

Here my critic bounced, and with an air of triumph asked me, if I could justify the little great man, in laying the emphasis on *calls*, instead of *cause*, and in not pausing at the end of the word *enough*, so as to give an opportunity of varying the voice for *Die then*. Though surprised at the impetuosity of the attack, I aimed at a reply, by saying, that the cause would be but of little import, if the call was not heard—and was preparing to go on with my vindication, when my opponent abruptly rumped me, to shew, I presume, his contempt of me as a critic. Here we ceased canvassing, to recover our mutual good humour, which was happily effected at the close of the first act, by the seasonable intervention of a piece of music.

In the 1st scene of the 2d act, Jaffier irritated wishes for a curse to kill Priuli, Pierre knowing such means to be ineffectual, says

Daggers, daggers are much better.

The emphasis here was on *daggers*, and the repetition; whereas my neighbour insisted, that it should have been laid on the first *daggers*, and on the words *much better*, as strongly marking the necessary

cessary preference that ought to be given them, for obtaining such an end. I could have replied in favour of Mr. Garrick; but, alas! the very sound of daggers is offensive to me; and as I recollected that my opponent had been really rude to me before, I thought I was under no necessity of plunging myself into a scrape on Mr. G—k's account; as he might possibly leave me to get out of it by myself.

Pierre endeavouring to reconcile Jaffier to an undertaking he was yet unapprized of, tells him in general, We'll

Openly act a deed the world may gaze
With wonder at, and envy when 'tis done.

Here my critic affirmed, that Mr. G——k was guilty of a grammatical absurdity, in stopping at gaze, and of an oratorical one, in not using the figure Cæsura, or pause, at the middle of the second line: they were to act a deed, to make the world wonder at, nay more, envy it when done: here was not only an open for a judicious break, but a necessity; for as the times marked by different passions were in fact very distinct, so ought they to have been expressed by the speaker. To this I would have replied, had I not been convinced, that the observation was injudicious. No man living knows the true value of a pause to recover himself, or to extort applause by, either with, or without gesticulation, better than Mr. G——k; and therefore no one makes more frequent use of it; I therefore concluded, that his censure did not merit a reply.

At his entrance among the conspirators, part of Pierre's salutation to Bedamar runs thus:

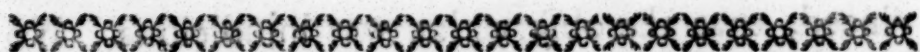
————— Oh! my Mars!
The poets, that first feign'd a God of War,
Sure prophesy'd of thee.

Here

Here my neighbour burst out into an incontinent fit of laughter; and, at length, recovering, cried, *Very like a whale*. Oh! Mars, Mars, how are you disgrac'd! I took the liberty of requesting he would restrain himself, and urged the possibility of great souls animating little bodies, and that the natural effect of such a junction, was the having great powers concentrated in a small space—he interrupted me, with a Zounds, Sir, did you ever see him in the tobacco boy? I reply'd, I had seen him in Abel Drugger. There Sir, said he, he personated well, but to suppose his figure and powers characteristical of the God of War, is a damned attempt to impose upon our senses.

Here I chose to break off all correspondence, as I found my critic began to be a proper object for a keeper. As I am apprehensive that I have been already too prolix in the recital of this choleric man's observations, I shall not trouble you with such as occurred to me in the last three acts, reserving them to a future opportunity, if I find by the publication of this, you are not averse to a correspondence with

THEATRICUS.



To Mess. T. F.—X. Y. Z.—and Theatricus.

Z—DS! Gentlemen, what do you mean? Will you never have done with Pierre and G——, and scene-drawing, and candle-snuffing. For God's sake, can you be so inconsiderate to imagine, that the public interest themselves in a matter of so very trifling a nature, as whether a player performs his part well or not. No gentleman, surely, considers G—— in any other light, than as a person, who
exhibits

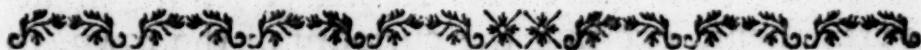
exhibits himself on a stage for his entertainment; and if he does justice to his part, he applauds; if not, he hisses him, at the time: But, certainly, it is below any rational creature to think of the dissipation of the stage, an instant beyond the vacant hour he has dedicated to the amusement which it affords. I should think a man employed his time full as well, who wrote an elaborate essay on the amazing feats exhibited by the *Chien Savant*, which, if *Shew Animals* are to be allowed any rank in society, must be deemed no contemptible personage. 'Sblood, gentlemen, if you have talents, and can write, employ your pens on subjects worthy the notice of judicious readers; and let the manager of Drury-Lane, fidget, and bounce and start, and dislocate the members of himself, or periods of his author, at pleasure.

I am,

*Batson's Coffee-house,
April 30, 1760.*

Your's, in a passion,

ANTI-THEATRICUS.



To the CRAFTSMAN.

S I R,

Hæ Nugæ seria ducent

In Mala——

HORACE.

I OBSERVE in your paper of last Saturday, a very angry letter, signed *Anti-Theatricus*, in which the author expresses his indignation, that gentlemen should misemploy their time, in writing upon theatrical subjects. I must agree with this warm writer, in the contempt, that he, with great propriety,

propriety, throws upon the situation of a player, which undoubtedly can never intitle a man to any consideration in society; as the united abilities, which excellence in the profession of acting requires, can only constitute a talent of mere entertainment. I should be sorry, that *Anti-Theatricus* imagined, I ever considered the modern theatrical idol in any other light, than as a person exhibiting himself a spectacle to every 'prentice-boy, who, with a shilling in his pocket, accepts the invitation, promulgated in the play-bills, and asserts the indisputable right of signifying his approbation or dissatisfaction. It is not to be controverted, that all shew-people (as this gentleman intimates) stand upon an equal footing, with respect to the public; and as no one will dispute, that if Mr. Powel, the fire-eater, calls the curious together, upon a promise to swallow melted lead for their amusement, and it appears, that he attempts to deceive them by a draught of quick-silver, every spectator, so imposed on, has a right to express his resentment, and caution others from being deceived in the same manner; so if the *Pseudo Roscius* publishes an advertisement, exciting the curiosity of the town, to attend his performance of a tragic hero, and he presents them *Mat o' the Mint*; upon the very same principle of reasoning, every individual of the audience may exert his prerogative of manifesting a contempt of the intended deception, and the public in general will think themselves obliged to him, who takes the trouble of guarding them against a delusion, into which the over-weaning pretensions of conceit and vanity may lay traps to seduce them. So far my sentiments entirely coincide with those of *Anti-Theatricus*; but I apprehend, that, when he asserted, that the stage was a scene of vacant dissipation, and extended no influence beyond the verge of the theatre, passion had
not

not suffered him fully to discuss the subject. If he had reflected a little, he would have recollected, that the theatre is considered as one school of eloquence; and in this view, it is of the greatest importance to society, that an inaccurate manner of elocution, or a false taste in declamation, should not be permitted to take place in the oratory of the stage. I cannot enforce the weight of this assertion more properly, than by supposing, that a young gentleman, who had formed his manner of speaking upon the peculiarities of the Drury-Lane favourite, should stand up in a public assembly, and deliver himself in the following manner, viz.

“ I rise—up Sir to manifest—my dissent from a
 “ measure, which however—introduced under the
 “ specious—pretence of advantage to government,
 “ must, in its consequences, be—productive of
 “ the most fatal—injury to society. The wisest—
 “ legislators have ever considered—the morals of a
 “ people, the first object—of government. How
 “ widely then should we—depart from this sage—
 “ principle, if, by indulging an unrestrained—
 “ use of spiritous—liquors to the populace, we
 “ lay a foundation for all the fatal—irregularities,
 “ arising—from drunkenness! I need support—
 “ this observation only—by reminding—gentle-
 “ men of the horrid—scenes of brutal—intem-
 “ perance, that every street in London offered—to
 “ public notice, before—the wisdom of the legi-
 “ slature interposed—a proper check—to a prac-
 “ tice, which enervated—the body, and extin-
 “ guishing—every principle of religion—and mo-
 “ rality in the mind, threatened—a general disso-
 “ lution of all order, and extinction—of the hu-
 “ man species.—These considerations weigh—so
 “ powerfully with me, that I shall give—my vote
 “ against the motion.” I apprehend, that what-
 ever force this gentleman’s reasoning might carry

with it, he would be able to draw over very few to his side of the question, if we admit, that in order to convince, it is necessary to be understood. Nor let the reader suspect, that I have wantonly exaggerated slight inaccuracies, which sometimes may proceed from the enthusiasm of passion transporting the player beyond all possibility of attending coolly to absolute precision, in point of elocution—That I have given a fair and candid representation of his manner, will appear a truth not to be palliated by adulation itself, if the following instances of incorrectness are added to those, which your ingenious correspondent *Theatriticus* pointed out in his letter, with great elegance of taste, and delicacy of irony.

Justice is *lame*, as well as *blind* among you.

The speaker thought proper, in this line, to skim over superficially the word *lame*, and lay the emphasis forcibly on *blind*, not considering, that the first is given by the poet as an additional epithet to the common characteristic of justice.

To pluck down new——fledged
Honours——

A separation destructive of all harmony, and the peculiar beauty of compound epithets !

Why these disgraceful——chains upon the
limbs——

Unpardonable impropriety and dissonance !

Are these the wreaths——of triumph you
bestow——

On those who bring you——conquest home
and honours ?

There

There are no less than three capital errors, in point of speaking, in those two lines.

His worth and sufferings— from a hard father

Taught me first to love him——

Here we are to understand, that Jaffier derives his worth, together with his sufferings, from the inhumanity of Priuli.

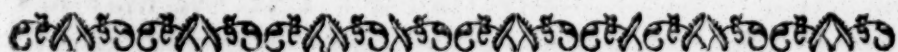
And thus I flatter myself I have proved, against the censures of your last Saturday's correspondent, that as false taste in theatrical amusements may operate more extensively, than at first view strikes an inattentive observer, it cannot be, with any foundation of reason, supposed, that a gentleman departs from his province, in endeavouring to obviate the effect of imposition, and point out to the public, which performances deserve their approbation, and which their contempt.

I am, S I R,

Bedford Coffee-house, your constant reader,
May 7, 1760.

and humble servant,

X. Y. Z.



To the CRAFTSMAN,

S I R,

I AM appointed by several gentlemen, who frequent this coffee-house, to return thanks to your correspondents, *Theatricus* and X. Y. Z. for dissipating an absurd delusion that we have laboured under for several years. The great popularity of

a favourite performer so far misled us, that, inconsiderately, we acquiesced in all the fulsome incense that adulation has offered up to this theatrical idol. Every character he assumed, we accustomed ourselves to think, appeared with all the advantages of genius and judgment. To persons under this state of deception, the appeals to common sense, and common grammatical knowledge, lately made in your paper, gave, as you may imagine, no small alarm. A consultation was held, at which each member appeared extremely staggered, that he should have been so egregiously imposed upon (supposing the criticisms of those writers to be sufficiently authorized) but as our memories did not serve us to clear up the point, it was agreed that we should go to the tragedy of Hamlet this evening, and each man, furnished with a printed play and a pencil, mark such improprieties, in respect of speaking, as Mr. G—— might possibly fall into. We are just returned from the theatre, and after comparing our observations, seize this first opportunity of acknowledging (not without some emotions of shame) the ridiculous error we have so long adopted, and profess ourselves converts to the good sense, and judicious observations, which display themselves so eminently in the letters written by the gentlemen who have lately honoured your paper with their animadversions. That we may not appear proselytes upon insufficient motives, it will be proper to communicate a few of the numberless inaccuracies which stand in array before us, upon drawing out a list of each person's remarks. It would, we apprehend, prove tiresome, should we transcribe a third part of those mutilated lines of unhappy Shakespear; and as it would give us great concern to encroach on the time and patience of your readers, I am directed to present them at present

present with only TWENTY; which are as follows, viz.

1. Oh that this too too solid—flesh would melt.
2. Or that the everlasting had not *fixt*——
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter.
3. As if increase of appetite had *grown*——
By what it fed on.
4. I think it was to see——my mother's wedding.
5. Their eyes purging——thick amber and plumb-tree gum.
6. He would drown——the stage with tears.
7. Or e're this,
I should have fatted——all the region kites
With this slave's offal.
8. that presently
They have proclaimed——their malefactions.
9. I'll have these players
Play something like—the murder of my father.
10. The play's the thing,
Wherein I'll catch—the conscience of the king.
11. Whether it is nobler in the mind, to *suffer*——
The stings and arrows, &c.
12. And makes us rather bear——those ills
we have,
13. Let not ever
The soul of Nero enter——this firm bosom.
14. When church-yards yawn, and hell itself
breaths out——contagion to the world.
15. O such a deed,
As from the body of contraction plucks——
16. The very soul, and sweet religion *makes*——
A rhapsody of words.
17. Proclaim no shame,
When the *compulsive*—ardour gives the charge.
18. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering—unction to your soul.
19. It

19. It will but skin and film—the ulcerous place.

20. Why may not imagination trace—the noble

Blood of Alexander, &c.

At the same time that we thus yield to conviction, let us hope, that your correspondents will continue their endeavours to remove the films of inattention and prejudice; more especially, as they have every encouragement to persist in that liberal design, by the impression already made on the public, and the disposition to be undeceived, which all ranks of people now universally manifest.

*George's Coffee-house,
Temple-bar, Saturday
May 10, 11 o'clock
at night.*

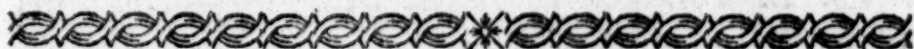
I am, S I R,

Your constant reader,

and much obliged

humble servant,

CANDIDUS.



To the CRAFTSMAN,

S I R,

Praise undeserved, is scandal in disguise.

IN reading a work lately publish'd by an eminent hand, entitled, *Dialogues of the Dead*, I find Mr. Pope introduced expressing himself, in a conversation with Boileau, upon the subject of Shakespear, in the following manner, viz. "You would
"admire him still more, if you could have the
"pleasure to see the chief characters in all his best plays

“ plays represented by an actor, who appeared on
 “ the stage a little before I left the world. He has
 “ shewn the English nation more excellencies in
 “ Shakespear, than ever the quickest wits could
 “ discern; and has imprinted them on the heart
 “ with a livelier sense, than the most sensible na-
 “ tures could feel, without his help.” I must own,
 that my astonishment was very great, in finding our
 British Homer made use of to convey an enco-
 mium of that nature. What! would the elegant
 Mr. Pope, whose admirable versification, and pecu-
 liar harmony of numbers, manifest a most chaste
 and correct ear, have set up as the elucidator of
 Shakespear, one who is so far from ever throwing
 the least light on any difficult passage of that won-
 derful writer, that he has obscured the clear and
 obvious meaning of the most simple lines in his
 works, by such an unnatural disjointing of the cor-
 respondent members, as frequently renders the
 whole an unintelligible jargon.* The illiterate
 reader will probably be startled at this assertion, but
 I aver the truth of it, and appeal to real judges of
 elocution, who have attended the performances of
 this actor. I propose to illustrate the point at large
 next winter, in a series of letters, comprehending
 the several characters undertaken by this gentle-
 man, in the order that they occur; and have not
 the least doubt, that I shall be able to demonstrate,
 beyond all possibility of controversy, “ That he
 “ never did, nor ever could, speak ten successive
 “ lines of Shakespear with grammatical propriety.”
 I suppose, therefore, that the respectable author of
 the dialogue, has, upon this occasion, been in-
 fluenced rather by a disposition of good-will toward
 the object of his eulogium, than that accuracy of
 taste and penetrating discernment, which shine so
 conspicuously throughout the writings of this noble

* Vide the letter signed *Candidus*.

author. I am the rather inclined to presume this, as the just sense he is pleased to express of Mr. Q——'s † merit, and the friendship he honoured him with, seem to make it impossible, that he should not most forcibly feel the striking contrast between the *dignity, force and elevation*, with which *he* delivered the sentiments of his author, and the *unconsequential frittering enervate* manner, that characterizes his opponent.

Bedford Coffee-house,
May 20, 1760.

I am, S I R,

Your humble servant,

X. Y. Z.

† ' BOILEAU. I have also heard of another, who has now left the stage, but who filled with great dignity, force, and elevation, some tragic parts; and excelled so much in the comic, that none ever has gained a higher applause.'



To T. H.—X. Y. Z.—THEATRICALUS, &c,

— Fuit haud ignobilis Argis,
Qui se credebat miros audire tragædos,
In vacuo lætus Sessor, Plausorque theatro:
Hic ubi, cognatorum opibus curisque refectus
Expulit Elleboro morbum bilemque meraco
Et redit ad sese; pol me occidistis, amici,
Non servastis, ait, cui sic extorta voluptas,
Et demtus per vim mentis gratissimus error.

HOR.

GENTLEMEN,

I AM neither commissioned by a club, nor bribed by a party to assure you, that your critical observations on Mr. — as a player, have either given

given me, or any body that I know, any real pleasure; I am not bound by any tie of gratitude, to thank you for emancipating me from the dominion of prejudice in his favour: I was happy, exceedingly so, in the opinion I entertained of him, as the greatest performer that was ever exhibited, and often thanked my stars for placing me in an æra so distinguished for theatrical merit: I never read his name in a public bill without a pleasing emotion, and never saw him on the stage without feeling a fruition, that to me was inexplicable. But, alas! how is the scene changed? I am taught by your directions to try the size of his merit by critical measures; and am convinced against my will, that I have, for these several years, been guilty of absurdly adoring a theatrical idol. What could tempt you to rob me, and nine tenths of this town, of the pleasing delusion of admiring him? In the rectifying our tastes, have you supplied us with an adequate repast? Are you sure, that proving him to be erroneous, will be a means of exciting an endeavour to be right? If not, pray, *cui bono*, all this railing?

You tell us, that he has neither the natural, nor the acquired abilities of a player; pray, who has? *his figure is diminutive*; I say it is *Mignonne*: *his voice is weak*; consider, it is worn out in the public service: *he wants grace*; but then he has gesticulation, which is no bad substitute: *he speaks with impropriety*; that is owing to his education; and an error in punctuation deserves some allowance: *he has an overflowing of art*; we are the more obliged to him, since nature has dealt her favours to him with so thrifty a hand. In short, gentlemen, if he mends not by your instruction, we shall have reason to be dissatisfied with our information. We entreat you, therefore, to leave us in

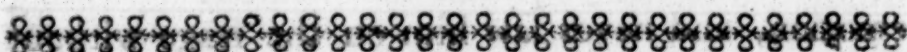
our unenlightened state, as there is a moral certainty of his being incorrigible.

Turk's Head Coffee-house,
May 21, 1760.

I am,

Gentlemen, &c.

PHILO-TRAGICUS.



To the CRAFTSMAN.

*At nostri proavi Plautinos et numeros et
Laudavere sales, nimium patienter utrumque,
Non dicam stulte, mirati; si modo ego et vos
Scimus inurbanum lepido seponere dicto,
Legitimumque sonum digitis callemus et aure.*

HOR.

S I R,

IN my letter of the 20th instant, I asserted that Mr. G——k never did, nor ever could, speak ten successive lines of Shakespear with grammatical, and I should have added, oratorical, propriety; and gave notice, of my designing next winter to illustrate this assertion in a series of letters, calculated to amuse the public and restore theatrical taste. At the time of my writing that letter, I did not foresee, that so fair and so immediate an opportunity would offer for the producing of matters of fact to corroborate what I had so affirmed, in opposition to the almost irresistible current of prejudice and prepossession; but his late appearance in the character of Richard the Third, invites me so strongly to try his merit, in an examination of that part, that I will submit to the public, whether I can, or cannot justify my assertion. The suffrage of applause,

which

which has ever been so lavishly bestowed on his performance of that character by the public, and the very uncommon pains he took that night, to exert himself, leave me no reason to doubt of his readily consenting to such a scrutiny, and the staking the whole of his tragical merit on that exhibition; and yet, if I mistake not, I shall be able to shew, that the errors he committed were too numerous to have escaped the observation of the judicious, and that they are yet too recent, not to be recollected upon a fair recapitulation of them.

As I have no private view in this contest; no interested scheme to serve, nor envious one to gratify in depreciating his merit; as I am neither a discarded player, nor a rejected poet, I have nothing at heart, but the rectifying the corrupt taste of the public. To effect this, I desire no more than a candid hearing; and when obtained, I am persuaded, I must receive from every unprejudiced person a determination in my favour. That I have fairly stated his manner of speaking, is a fact I most confidently affirm; each word was marked by different persons, equal to the task; and those only, in which we all agreed, are here observed on. I therefore challenge him, and the warmest of his friends, to exculpate him from the charge of false and absurd speaking, or to convict me of misrepresenting him.

To facilitate the reading and understanding the following mistaken passages, I must premise, that the words printed in Italics, are those he thought fit to lay the emphasis on; that such as are in Small Capitals, I apprehend he ought to have spoken emphatically; and that where there is a break between words, not to be found in the original, he there either paused injudiciously, or stopped ungrammatically; and lastly, that where no observation

is made, the reader will be pleased to imagine that he spoke with propriety.

Richard's first soliloquy opens with an observation on the change of court amusements, then induced by peace; and confessing that the deformity of his person made him an improper sharer in these soft, enervating pleasures, he resolves on seizing his brother's diadem; as command and power seemed to him to be the only possible means of making him respectable. I shall transcribe the whole of this speech, and mark it agreeable to the recited plan, that I may avoid the suspicion of breaking the context, with a design of rendering the manner absurd.

1. Now *are* our brows bound with VICTORIOUS
wreaths,
Our STERN alarms are *changed* to MERRY meet-
ings;
Our DREADFUL *marches* to DELIGHTFUL mea-
sures:
Grim visaged war has smooth'd his wrinkled
front,
And now, *instead* of mounting BARBED steeds,
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute:
But I that *am* not SHAP'D for SPORTIVE tricks,
I, that *am* CURTAIL'D of man's FAIR proportion,
Deform'd, unfinish'd, *sent* BEFORE my time—
Into this breathing world, *scarce* HALF made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable,
That dogs BARK *at* me as I HALT by 'em.
Why I, in this WEAK PIPING time of *peace*,
Have no delight to pass away my hours,
Unless to *see*—my SHADOW in the Sun,
And descant on my own deformity.
THEN *since* this earth *affords* no joy to me,
But

But to command, to check, and o'erbear such—
 As are of *HAPPIER person* than myself:
 Why then to me—this restless world's but hell.
 Till this mishapen trunk's—aspiring head——
 Be circled in a glorious diadem.
 But *THEN* 'tis fix'd on *SUCH* a *height*: oh! I
 Must stretch the utmost reaching of my soul.
 I'll climb betimes, *without REMORSE OR DREAD*,
 And my first step—shall be on Henry's head.

It is needless, I presume, to comment this speech, as I flatter myself, that the marks sufficiently evince the impropriety with which it was spoke. I cannot, however, omit observing, that the pause in the last line is, in my opinion, very injudiciously placed. Richard, after mature deliberation, concludes, that the death of his brother is the first necessary step, by which he must ascend the throne; had the pause been made between the words *be* and *on*, it must have had a more pleasing effect on the hearers, evidently pointing out the variety of obstacles that stood in his way, and strongly marking the necessity of Henry's being the first, the preferred victim to his ambition. This, however, is more a matter of fancy than judgment, and I offer it, not as a censure, but rather as advice.

2. Suspicion always *baunts* the guilty mind.

The great impropriety of emphasizing the word *baunts*, is obvious to every one that attends to the moral of the line, and feels it. Had the words *always* and *guilty* been omitted, then the speaking of it would have been just, but the forcible meaning destroyed.

3. That I should snarl, and bite, and *play* the dog.

In this line the verbs *snarl*, and *bite*, are strongly characteristic, and with propriety admit of an emphasis;

phasis ; but pray, Mr. G——k, inform me, why the word *play*, that has nothing peculiarly marking in it, should be forcibly spoke, and *dog*, to which the whole line is appropriated, be neglected.

4. *Then* since the heav'ns have shap'd my body so,
Let hell make crook'd my mind to *answer* it.

Here Richard, impiously charging heaven, with bestowing on him a mishapen body, seems to wish that hell may form his mind correspondent to it. Why the words *heaven* and *hell*, *body* and *mind*, which are of great import, were not attended to in the speaking of these lines ; and why the words *then* and *answer*, of but small value, were spoke emphatically, is a matter I am not able to account for ; Mr. G——k alone can solve the difficulty.

5. Clarence still breathes, Edward still lives and reigns,
When they are *gone*, then I must count *my* gains.

His manner of speaking these lines cannot be sufficiently explained by marks. Here is a double time, and different persons referred to: had he accented *when* and *then*, as marking two periods very opposite to each other, and very interesting to Richard, the emphasis might have been defensible; but the indisputable way of speaking them is, in the opposing of *they* to *I*: *they* stand between *him* and the crown; and *their* removal is requisite to give birth to *his* happiness; and therefore the pronouns *they* and *I* should have been strongly marked in speaking. Why he preferred accenting the word *gone*, I can assign no reason for, except its being a verb, which he is fond of speaking forcibly. Many reasons might be assigned for his laying a stress on the word *my* preceding gains ; but I shall omit
inserting

inserting them, as they might appear, perhaps, too particular.

6. I'll *take* her passion in its *WAIN*, and *turn*—
This storm of grief to gentle drops of pity—
For his *REPENTANT* *murder*.

In these, not quite, three lines, are two false pointings, and three absurd emphasises. Richard, well knowing that the storm of a woman's passion cannot last long, wisely determines to take it in its decline; persuaded that he may then convert her anger into pity for a murderer, now grown penitent. From this motive alone he expects her forgiveness, and yet the word *repentant* was spoke, as if its introduction was barely to fill up the measure, while *murderer* was strongly marked.

7. Poor girl, what pains she takes to *curse* herself.

By this way of speaking, it seems, as if the simple act of *curfing* was the sole cause of Richard's ironical pity; to me it appears, that he gibes at her, as unknowingly cursing *herself*. But I may be mistaken.

8. Sweet Saint, *be* not so hard for *CHARITY*.

9. Whence is it thou, fair excellence, *art*
GUILTY.

10. ————— *but* to *ACQUIT* myself.

11. ————— But gentle Lady Anne
To leave this—keen encounter of our tongues.

Why stop after this? it is not so marked even in the most faulty editions.

12. Nay do not pause, for I did *kill* King Henry,
But 'twas *THY* wondrous *beauty* did provoke
me :

Or

Or now dispatch—'twas I that *stabb'd* young
Edward,

But 'twas THY heavenly *face* did set me on.

The acts of stabbing and killing required no forcible speaking towards making an impression on Lady Anne : but the acknowledging, that these cruel deeds were committed by him, and through affection for her, makes it requisite, that the pronouns *I* and *thy* should be strongly marked, as he seems to expect her forgiveness partly from his confession, and partly from his flattery, as her beauty had been the incentive that tempted him to the murderous crimes he had been guilty of.

13. Then bid me *kill* MYSELF, and I will do it.

By his former conduct, and confession, it appears, that he was sufficiently ready to kill, and therefore the verb might have escaped the emphasis; but as he seemed willing to change the object, if she ordered him, he should have marked *himself*.

14. Oh ! if thy poor devoted servant might
But beg—one favour at thy gracious hand.

This pause after *beg* was certainly very judicious ; as Richard was in doubt, and deliberated, whether he should ask for one or two favours at her hand ; but concluding that she might think him forward, he prudently confined his request.

15. That it may please thee, leave these sad de-
signs—

To him that has most cause to be a mourner,
And presently repair to Crosby house ;
Where after I have solemnly interr'd—
At Chertsey monastery this injur'd King.

In these few lines the reader may observe, that
he has twice erred against the sense of the author,
and

and the nature of punctuation, and the player must be made to observe, that, although it is unbecoming me to criticize his provincial pronunciation, yet it is advisable in him, for the sake of decency, to be more careful in speaking the word *interr'd*.

16. Whose all not equals—Edward's moiety?

17. That I may *see*—my SHADOW as I pass.

18. The massy WEIGHT *on't* CALLS my laden brow

19. Poverty, the reward of honest fools,
O'ERTAKE him *for't*.

20. Thus far we *run* BEFORE the wind,

My fortune smiles, and gives me ALL that
I DARE *ask*.

The conquered Lady Anne is bound in
VOWS,

Fast as the PRIEST can *make* us, we are one.

The King my *brother* SLEEPS without his
pillow,

And I am *left* the guardian of his INFANT
heir.

I must beg to know from this supposed unerring performer, if he apprehends the word *run* to be expressive of the success, at which Richard exults in the opening of this soliloquy: to me it appears, to be implied in the metaphor of going *before* the wind; and therefore the emphasis should not be laid on the word *run*. If Lady Anne be bound to him in vows, that make them one, is this, pray, comprised in the word *make*? or rather, is not the *Priest* the word that should be forcibly expressed, as the only possible author of such a tie? If towards compleating the happiness of Richard, it

F

were

were necessary that the life of his brother should be sacrificed, to give an open for his obtaining the possession of the infant heir, by whose subsequent murder he might seize the diadem for himself; how injudicious was it to mark strongly the degree of consanguinity, by laying the emphasis on brother, as he claimed not by descent; and slur over inattentively the jesting manner in which he recites his death, and in consequence of that, *his* being left the *guardian* of the *infant* heir? Here the verb seems to be exceedingly undeserving of an emphasis: as Richard's joy arose from *his* being the *guardian* to the heir, then in an *infantile* stile.

It would be endless to observe on every false emphasis: the reader will, I hope, see the strength of my objections to several lines as marked, without a special observation on each; and be convinced, I flatter myself, that I have proved my assertion, by these few quotations, for few indeed they are, when compared with the infinite number that might be taken from the two first acts of Richard. The remaining three shall be commented on, when a vacant hour will permit; unless the publisher of this should think it right to inform me, that he would prefer giving a new edition of the play, marked agreeable to the specimen of the first soliloquy; in which case I will indulge him with the whole, prefaced with some observations on Mr. G——k's present method of playing this character, and contrasted with his former, as well as Mr. Q——'s manner: in which I shall be able to shew, that the *now* performer has totally changed his manner, and consequently lost his merit, as the alteration is not owing to matured reason, but impaired execution; that his spirit is evaporated, his fire almost extinct; that his remaining marking countenance and gesticulation may continue for some short time, claps-traps for boys and girls; but that he, and they, must

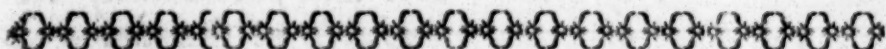
must become the objects of contempt, to every literary mind.

*Bedford Coffee-house,
May 28, 1760.*

I am, S I R,

Your humble servant,

X. Y. Z.



To the CRAFTSMAN,

An E D I C T.

To our trusty and well-beloved * ADULATORS.

WHEREAS we have determined to close the theatrical season this day, with the tragedy of KING RICHARD, and it being of the utmost importance to us, that the said performance should go off with singular eclat, we hereby enjoin you, our trusty and well-beloved adulators, to attend at your several stations in Drury-lane, between the hours of five and six in the evening. And we farther require you most carefully and attentively to applaud us, with observable emotions of admiration and astonishment, at the several CLAP-CUES which our most faithful servant T——y P——s shall deliver out respectively to each and every of you. And we do moreover strictly command you, at the peril of our deepest displeasure, that you become remarkably clamorous and vociferous at every passage, requiring even common exertion of voice, in

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the

* It is proper to inform the liberal readers, that (however incredible it may appear) there are certainly people in this town, who let themselves down so very—very low, as to become the ADULATORS of an ACTOR. *Risum teneatis.*

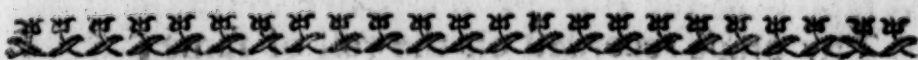
the said tragedy, that the unavoidable huskiness of our tones, and the unhappy decline of our powers, which have been too universally taken notice of this winter, may (if possible) be concealed from the audience.

It is likewise our pleasure, that in the intervals of the acts, you throw out among the ignorant certain intimations of our *vast abilities, surprising fatigue, bad state of health, &c.* and particularly enforce the *black ingratitude and folly* of the deserters to Ireland, who have cruelly left us without one assistant, whom, with all our art, we can even *impose* upon the public. We moreover absolutely order you, upon the immediate conclusion of the play, to take the round of the several coffee-houses, within the theatrical district, and attest, with proper confidence, *that we never played the character so well, that our powers were more clear and forcible than they have been for many years—and that our elocution was regulated by the most refined taste and accurate precision.* And lastly, we require you all to assemble, at a quarter past ten o'clock, in our dressing-room, when and where we shall be prepared to receive your homage, and each person may expect to be rewarded, in proportion to the degree of his servility.

Given at our palace in Bridges-street,
this 29th day of May, 1760, being
the 20th year of our sovereign contempt of grammar.

***** *:

To



To the CRAFTSMAN,
S I R,

By inserting the following, you will convince the world of that impartiality, which you have always professed in the conduct of your paper.

June 17, 1760.

I am,

Your constant reader and admirer,

INGENUUS.

A full refutation of all the *illiberal* and *unsupported* criticism, that has appeared in the Craftsman, upon the performance of Mr. G——k, in some of his most capital characters. With a commentary.

Sic junctæ suaves miscetis odores.

VIRGIL.

From the LONDON CHRONICLE,
May 20.

To Mr. G——K.

Occasioned by the many virulent and ill-natured aspersions thrown out against him in the Craftsman.

DROOP not, my friend, because the critic herd
The wreath of honour from thy brows would
tear ;

'Tis * envy prompts 'em to the deeds of ill,

'Tis envy prompts their little souls to dare.

Wrapp'd

* Quere. Whether Mr. G—— can possibly be an object of envy to any human being above the rank of an under-actor, or necessitous scribbler ?

Wrapp'd in the robe of merit, live to see
 Thy praise recorded on the roll of fame;
 Whatever efforts Pseudo-criticks make,
 Their spite can ne'er obliterate thy name.

Lincoln's-Inn, May 19.

W. W.



From the SAME PAPER, June 12.

To Mr. G——K.

Occasioned by a poem called the * ACTOR, and a
 paper called the CRAFTSMAN.

STILL, Garrick, still pursue thy glorious task,
 Nor think that Britons their applause refuse;
 What nobler boon can'st thou and merit ask,
 Than L——d to praise, and S——y to abuse.

* A most keen and poignant satire on the flagrant inaccuracies of the modern theatrical favourite, though pleasantly mistaken by the epigrammatist for an eulogium on him. In support of this opinion, I shall only request the candid and judicious reader to peruse the following lines, and then be pleased to answer, whether he thinks, that they can, with equal propriety and force, be applied to any other performer in the three kingdoms.

Nor proper, T——n, can those sounds appear,
Which bring not numbers to thy nicer ear;
For them, in vain, the pleasing measure flows,
Whose recitation runs it all to prose;
Repeating what the poet sets not down;
 THE VERB DISJOINTING FROM ITS FRIENDLY
 NOUN.
 WHILE PAUSE, AND BREAK, AND REPETITION
 JOIN
 TO MAKE A DISCORD IN EACH TUNEFUL LINE.
 To

To the EDITOR of the St. JAMES'S EVENING
Post, June 14.

S I R,

THE Craftsman was once renowned for standing foremost in the rank of periodical papers, when under the management and inspection of the ingenious Mr. MURPHY:* but as Hamlet says, "To what base uses we may return;" it is now,

* We suppose the letter-writer refers to the juvenile productions of this gentleman, first published in the Craftsman, at a period of life, when the warmth of a youthful imagination hurried him into undistinguishing panegyric. When time and experience had matured the judgment of that very sprightly and entertaining author, he began to view things through the medium of true criticism, and obliged the world with a delineation of the character of MARPLOT, in the play of the BUSY BODY, executed with the most masterly touches; in which admirable critique (perhaps the best of the kind this age has produced) he convinced the public of Mr. G——k's incapacity to execute that part, and fully exposed and defeated that performer's ineffectual attempt to rival Mr. Woodward. As the subject leads me to it, I cannot avoid bewailing the peculiarly unhappy fate, that has attended Mr. G—— in three very remarkable instances. When Mr. Barry most *ungratefully* left him, he undertook the character of Romeo, which unhappily sat so ill upon him, that from thence we may date the establishment of Mr. Barry's great reputation. When Mr. Woodward, with equal (if not *greater*) *ingratitude*, deserted his colours, it was hoped, that he might be lessened in the eye of the public, by the disadvantage of a comparison with the great Roscius. But, alas! who can controul his fate! The inimitable performance, mentioned in the former part of this note, too sensibly convinced Mr. G——, that it was not to be done by MARPLOT: and lastly, when Mr. Mossop, unmindful of numberless favours conferred upon him, with *unparelled ingratitude*, retired to his native country, it would have been lucky if the town could have seen his parts filled in a manner, that would render him insignificant. But the fate of *Pierre* is too recent, and indeed of too melancholy a nature for me to dwell upon.

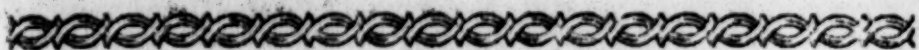
now, alas! become the common sewer for every dirty scribbler in town, along whose muddy channel every Saturday flows nonsense and scurrility. The principal person employed in this dirty work, is the disappointed author of a tragedy called *Edward the Black Prince*, which made its appearance not many years ago, at the Theatre in Drury-Lane; but proving a poor, weakly, ill-built-vessel, with much difficulty weather'd through the nine nights storm, and then went to the bottom. Mr. Garrick has therefore unluckily incurred the hatred and abuse of this snarling Grub-street scavenger, who is continually bespattering and defiling him in all those dramatic characters, for which he is so justly admired; and endeavouring, by all the artful insinuations of vile criticism, to make him appear despicable in the eyes of the world; how happily has the great Shakespear depicted such an undermining wretch, “ † Who steals my
 “ purse, steals trash, 'twas mine, 'tis his, and has
 “ been slave to thousands; but he who filches
 “ from me my good name, robs me of that which
 “ not enriches him, and makes me poor indeed.”
 The man who blasts the reputation of another, is stamped with the infamous mark of a murderer, as much as he who stabs him in the dark, and ought to have the same punishment inflicted on him as a late unfortunate Lord, who bore the same name ‡ as
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† *Who steals my purse, steals trash, &c.* This quotation alone must immediately silence every malevolent insinuation that Mr. G—— is the author of this polite and ingenious letter.

‡ A very smart conceit! 'Tis pity the author could not make it the point of an epigram, in which, I apprehend, he may have a better chance of succeeding than in prose. One thing, however, would have taken off from the force of the satire, which is only this, that the late writers in the *Craftsman* are entirely unacquainted with the gentleman alluded to, and do not even know him by sight. No matter for that, the insinuation is not unartful, for very obvious reasons.

the present insignificant writer of the *Craftsman*, or *Gray's-Inn Journal*.

A LOVER of TRUTH.



A C A R D.

MESS. *Theatricus* and X. Y. Z. present their compliments to Mr. G——k, and take this opportunity of informing him, that, as the theatrical season is now closed, and all conversation on dramatic subjects will be, in a great measure, suspended during the vacation, they shall retire into the country until the middle of September next. But they cannot prevail upon themselves finally to take leave, without promising, in a most solemn manner, that they will attend him with uncommon assiduity throughout the next winter; when he may be assured, that strict justice shall be done to the **PLAYER**, to the **MANAGER**, and to the **PUBLIC**. And now they beg permission,

In their own names, and the name of the public in general, to return him thanks for the vast attention he has shewn to the improvement of the stage. And they desire leave to express their acknowledgment of the respect he has been pleased to pay to their understanding, in presenting them with a dramatic, or rather, undramatic Farrago, consisting of the following ingredients, viz. *High Life Below Stairs—Woman's a Riddle—The Desert Island—The Way to Keep him—And a Taylor without a Head*. And, as he has had an opportunity of satisfying himself, by so infallible a test, of the full extent of the public folly, they have not the least doubt, but he will spend the summer in collecting such materials for their future entertainment, as a passive submission to imposition must give him every encouragement to rely upon.

F I N I S.

